



IN SUPPORT OF HB 1020

Senate Appropriations Committee

TESTIMONY OF JOE SHELDON

NORTH DAKOTA CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 9, 2023

Chairman Wanzek and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity for the North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA) to share our support of House Bill 1020 and funding for the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station.

For the record, my name is Joe Sheldon. I farm near Washburn, ND with my wife and family. Our crop rotation consists of Spring Wheat, Pinto Beans, Soybeans, and Corn. I am a North Dakota Corn Growers Association board member, which is the voice of North Dakota corn producers, representing more than 13,000 growers across the state.

Agriculture, and specifically corn production, have made great strides towards sustainability in the last few decades. Corn grower commitments have paved the way for improvements in a number of key indicators. In its first ever sustainability report, the National Corn Growers Association reports that between 1980 and 2015, our nations corn farmers have decreased the amount of land required to produce a bushel of corn by 41 percent; reduced soil loss per acre by 58 percent; improved energy use efficiency per bushel by 41 percent; reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per bushel by 31 percent; and improved irrigation efficiencies, leading to per bushel declines in irrigation water usage of 46 percent. But corn growers haven't done this on their own. We rely on a web of partners in agribusiness, technology, and higher education to help us to achieve these efficiencies.

The Ag Experiment Station funding in this bill will allow continued vital work on plant protection, production, and crop disease research, helping our state's ag producers to increase their yields exponentially. The climate smart agriculture initiative will serve as a tremendous resource for our state's ag producers, as consumers and our federal executive branch of government are demanding more progress in this arena.

Similarly, SBARE's top initiative for NDSU Extension, the Cropping Systems initiative in which extension specialists work on western crop production and weed management, on farm research aims to help expand agriculture's footprint in North Dakota.

Capital improvement investment in the field lab is critical for facilities needed for agronomic research. We need an effective space for breeding, plant pathology, soil science, and development of high value crops. Corn growers across North Dakota will benefit from research in weed science, plant pathology, as well as soils research that will be conducted in this building and it will help NDSU attract the caliber of talent needed to solve future challenges in agriculture.

If not for the funded efforts in these programs, this work would otherwise fall short and is certain to adversely impact our economic output on the farm and in the state.

Our mission statement is "growing a healthy, profitable business climate for northern corn," and the ag experiment station and NDSU's ag research are valuable tools to help producers meet that mission. Thank you for your continued support of North Dakota agriculture and NDSU research and extension. We urge your support of HB 1020 and the ag priorities contained therein. Thank you for your time today and I will stand in response to any questions you may have.